



**Roger D. Breed, Ed.D., Commissioner**  
**Scott Swisher, Ed.D., Deputy Commissioner**

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301 Centennial Mall South  
PO Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Tel: (402) 471-2295  
Fax: (402) 471-0117  
Web: [www.education.ne.gov](http://www.education.ne.gov)

## EARLY CHILDHOOD SPRING WEBINAR Q&A 2011

**1. Can school districts get samples of readiness of assessments?**

The Nebraska Department of Education's Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC) has a limited number of assessments that can be checked out. The phone number for the media center at ECTC is (402) 557-6885.

Additionally, the BUROS Institute of Mental Measurements at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has reviewed an extensive list of assessments information on their research can be found at <http://www.unl.edu/buros/bimm/html/00testscomplete.html>

**2. Should the readiness assessment mirror the NE state standards?**

The readiness assessment should not mirror the NE state standards for kindergarten. The Nebraska State Standards for kindergarten are at levels that children exiting kindergarten at the end of the year should know and be able to do. That would not be an appropriate measure for children beginning kindergarten. An assessment aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for children ages 3-5 would be more appropriate. Children who are proficient at the most complex criteria in the 7 seven domains of the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines would be prepared to enter kindergarten.

**3. Can the AEPS that is currently used in our district for Results Matter be used as a readiness assessment? And if yes, can a school district set their own cut scores for this assessment?**

Yes, the AEPS can be used as a readiness assessment. Yes, the district must set their own cut scores.

**4. Can COR and Creative Curriculum also be used?**

Both the High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR) and Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum may also be used. Again, school districts would need to set cut scores for each assessment.

**5. Regarding LB1006, are there any legal ramifications concerning the assessment procedure that school districts should be aware of? For example, could a family question the assessment chosen by the school board? How will we know if we chose a "recognized assessment?"**

The statute calls for "a recognized assessment procedure for determining if the child is capable of carrying the work of kindergarten". There is no additional clarification regarding the recognized assessment procedure. A recognized assessment procedure would indicate that the legislation is eliminating informal assessments created by individual school districts or teachers.

The law also states that the school board must approve and make available a recognized assessment procedure. It would be key that the school be approve an assessment procedure in the allotted time frame and also be aware of the reasons the district is recommending the assessment. It could be possible that families question the assessment. The district should approve the assessment as well as the policies related to early entry assessment to make sure that the policies are clear to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation and questions by families or other constituents.

**6. Is this assessment something that all children should take before going to Kindergarten?**

NO! This assessment is only for children whose parents want them to enter kindergarten early. Schools are not allowed to assess children who are age eligible prior to kindergarten entry for the purpose of placing the children or recommending the child be held out of school. Kindergarten is an entitlement for children who are of kindergarten eligibility age.

**7. Does the entry date for preschool also change to July 31st?**

No, according to state statute, an early childhood education program is defined as any prekindergarten part-day or full-day program of in-home family support program with a stated purpose of promoting social, emotional, intellectual, language, physical, and aesthetic development and learning for children from birth to kindergarten-entrance age and family development and support. Rev.State.Stat. 79-1101(3)(b). A preschool program's entry dates are not set by state statute or by NDE Rule 11, they are set by local districts and their partners. All care must be taken to ensure that children transitioning out of early intervention services (EDN) or an Early Childhood Education Grant Program for Children Birth to Three (Sixpence) do not experience a gap in services.

**8. Is there a mandatory age a child must enter Kindergarten?**

Kindergarten itself is optional for children to attend. However, children must be enrolled and attending school by the time they reach mandatory attendance age. In Nebraska, "a child is of mandatory attendance age if the child (a) will reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year and (b) has not reached eighteen years of age." Neb.Rev.Stat 79-201 (1)(a)and (b).

**9. Did you say school districts can set their own entrance date**

School districts may set their own entrance date for preschool. Districts may not set their own entry dates for kindergarten.

**10. Is there data that supports that when a child turns 5 they are ready for kind?**

There is research to indicate that teachers deem a percentage of each group of children as "not ready", regardless of the school or area. This matches other evidence children in any group will demonstrate a variety of levels of ability and prior learning. However, in Nebraska, kindergarten is a right for children who are of age to attend and state law has set the age for kindergarten. Schools have the responsibility to educate each child regardless of that child's accumulated learning or prior experience. You can also reference the Kindergarten Position Statement which is available at <http://www.education.ne.gov/ech/KStatement.pdf>.

**11. Is there any way the state will allow schools to serve those students (in preschool) who may turn 5 before October 15th?**

Public school district may only serve a child in preschool that turns 5 on or before October 15 of the school year (on or before July 31 beginning in 2012) if that child has a verified disability and the child's IEP team determines that the child's needs would be best met in preschool. There are no other "waivers" or exceptions allowed in law.

**12. What do you do for kids whose parents don't want the kids to go to K, but can't go to preschool anymore?**

Parents have the right to keep their children out of school until the year the child reaches mandatory attendance age. Parents can keep their children home with them, or may send the child to a private child care center or preschool. School districts can provide enhanced transition activities to help families and young children feel comfortable with kindergarten. Schools should also ensure that the curriculum in kindergarten is for 5 year-olds and not for 6 or 7 year olds.

**13. What if there are not any other early childhood programs offered in our area?**

See question 12 and 13. This would be a good example of a community need identified to establish one or more private or non-profit community-based EC programs.

**14. If a school would have a kindergarten academy/transitional kindergarten where they enroll the child in kindergarten, half day, can we use a preschool curriculum?**

No, kindergarten academies/transitional kindergartens are kindergarten classrooms. Children in these classrooms would be enrolled in the school as a kindergarten child and would need to be reflected in NSSRS as a child in kindergarten. The curriculum should be aligned with the Nebraska Standards for Kindergarten. The kindergarten curriculum must be taught and be appropriate for 5-year-olds, not 4 year-olds or first graders.

**15. Why does it seem that this is taking away the parent's choice about when they want to send their child to school?**

Outside of the compulsory attendance age requirement, parents have (and always had) options about when to send their child to school. The variable that has changed, is that there are public preschool opportunities for children who are not yet old enough for kindergarten that didn't exist 20 or 30 years ago. The public preschool was designed to be a support for families in preventing children from being "not ready" for the beginning school experience. Unfortunately, there are not enough resources statewide to ensure that all preschool age children have access to public preschool. The publicly supported option for 5 year olds is kindergarten. Parents may choose to send their children to kindergarten, attend a faith-based or community-based ec program, or may choose to keep them home until the child is of mandatory attendance age – just like always.

**16. Why are preschoolers required to have 450 hours and Kindergarten is 400 hours?**

Prior to the last revision of Rule 11, NDE conducted a survey of districts to determine the number of hours districts were then operating their early childhood program. Because it was at the lower range of the average number of hours, 450 hours was agreed upon to include as a minimum in Rule 11. The 400 hours for kindergarten is antiquated but still on the books because legislation has not been introduced to change the number. There are only a handful of schools in the state that do not provide all day every day kindergarten.

**17. How are children in a transitional kindergarten entered into NSSRS?**

These children would be entered as having a grade level of Kindergarten.

**18. Are you sure that the new code is not for children with IFSPs or IEPs served at home?**

The new participation info code EC0006 is for "Students age birth to kindergarten entrance age served in a non-special education home visiting program." SPED Pre-K students served at home are being counted with a SPED Template. We are trying to identify children being served at home that are not SPED.

**19. How do you enter the data for NSSRS?**

For assistance entering data in NSSRS please contact the NDE Helpdesk at 888-285-0556 or at our local number 402-471-3151. You can also send an email to [nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov).

**20. Will the ELLCO observation tool will not be used next year?**

No the ELLCO will not be used next year. NDE will be only be using the ECERS as an observation tool.

**21. What would be the code for an EC teacher who also serves as the sped teacher?**

If they are the head teacher for the EC program they would have a staff position assignment code of P-1160. For assistance assigning the appropriate assignment code for staff, feel free contacting Tammi Hicken at 402-471-3184.

**22. Is the Programs Fact Template-Early Childhood due in June?**

Yes, by June 30, 2011.

**23. Will the data for Results Matter be masked if you have fewer than 10 IEP or IFSP students in this group?**

Yes. District data that is publically-reported on the State of the Schools Report (SOSR) will be masked if there are fewer than 10 children reported in a group.

**24. Who can I talk to make sure I understand how to get all of the data in correctly for Results Matter?**

Please contact Barb Jackson [bjjackso@unmc.edu](mailto:bjjackso@unmc.edu) or Sue Bainter [sue.bainter@nebraska.gov](mailto:sue.bainter@nebraska.gov).

**25. What if we mark exit date on a child and then the IEP team decides the child should remain in preschool another year?**

Any exit data, using any of the 3 assessment tools, must be collected by the time the child is 6 years of age as this is the upper age limit for cut scores in all 3 tools. If data is marked as exit and then the decision is made for the child to remain in preschool, online managers have the capability to go back to previously entered data within the same school year and make this change (each tool has different instructions for how to accomplish this). As long as the child remains in preschool and until 6 years of age, data would continue to be collected.

**26. Is the exit date leaving Pre-K?**

Yes, if the child will move onto kindergarten, the last day of Pre-K would be considered the exit date.

**27. Are there any problems when a student turns 3 but elects to remain on an IFSP for the remainder of the year? Will this mess up the data reporting?**

No. For children with an IFSP who are turning three, exit data is collected and reported according to the child's age. It is not related to whether or not the child has an IFSP or an IEP. For Creative and AEPS, all children in Part C must have their exit assessment completed by 36 months. For COR, children must have their exit assessment completed by 33 months. Children will continue to have an IFSP and a services coordinator until transitioning to preschool services with an IEP. The date of the child's IEP is the Part B entry date. Please click on this link to see the Results Matter Technical Assistance Document (page 15): [http://www.education.ne.gov/ECH/rm\\_technical\\_assistance\\_doc.pdf](http://www.education.ne.gov/ECH/rm_technical_assistance_doc.pdf)

**28. When do we archive children who are going to Kindergarten in the fall?**

For children going to Kindergarten, child data can be archived once entry and exit data have been finalized. NDE accesses the data for reporting purposes each year in July.

**29. If we have a child who goes on an IEP in the middle of year, do we need to mark OSEP for them?**

Yes. The child's IEP date becomes the entry date for OSEP purposes and the child's nearest checkpoint data would become the entry data.

**30. Is the data Jan is talking about regarding district determination on the ILCD website or is it somewhere else?**

It is on each district's secure ILCD website.

**31. Why is a new profile required when transferring from Part C to B.? In the past they have been transferred from home base to preschool. We are currently using Creative Curriculum**

Creating a new profile is the terminology used to describe the online process used to begin collecting Part B entry data. Each online system has different instructions. Remember that exit data for Part C data is collected by the time the child turns 3 years of age. Whenever the first IEP is held, entry data for Part B is collected. Please see the Results Matter TA document for specific details.

**32. What do you mean by district determinations under IDEA? Funding?**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides funds to states for the education of children with disabilities, birth to age 21. In order to receive IDEA federal funding, each State Department of Education is required to develop a State Performance Plan (SPP) and an Annual Performance Report (APR). The Part B and Part C SPPs/APRs must identify state targets for meeting each of the monitoring indicators outlined. Based on the state targets and the district's reported data for each target, NDE must make an annual determination of how each district is doing, and publically report each school district's performance compared to the state targets. District determinations are made according to these four levels 1) meets requirements 2) needs assistance 3) needs intervention and 4) needs substantial intervention.

**33. With GOLD, since it is a B-5 assessment, is it necessary to exit and create a new profile in part B?**

No. GOLD is a uniform and completely continuous system B-5.

**34. Do children that who are age-eligible for KDG but have an IEP to attend preschool need to be in Results Matter assessments?**

If the IEP team determines that the child should stay in preschool even though the child is age eligible for kindergarten, Results Matter data must continue to be collected until the child turns 6 years of age (72 months). At this time, exit data must be collected. Please refer to the Results Matter Technical Assistance Document at: [http://www.education.ne.gov/ECH/rm\\_technical\\_assistance\\_doc.pdf](http://www.education.ne.gov/ECH/rm_technical_assistance_doc.pdf)

**35. Is the state going to one assessment system for Results Matter?**

Yes, beginning with the 2012-13 school year, all school districts and ESU early childhood programs and services for children B-5 are required to use Teaching Strategies GOLD for Results Matter child data.

**36. Is Teaching Strategies Gold is from the Creative Curriculum Company?**

Yes. Teaching Strategies Inc. is the name of the publishing company for both the Creative Curriculum and GOLD assessment tools

**37. So, do we need to switch to that from COR?**

Yes. Your district choose to make the switch for the 2011-2012 school year, or wait until the 2012-2013 school year.

**38. May we use Teaching Strategies Gold next year (2011-2012 school year)? We currently use AEPS?**

Yes.

**39. Will there be GOLD training this summer?**

Yes, NDE is currently working on a statewide plan for GOLD training beginning Summer, 2011.

**40. Where and when are the GOLD trainings being held?**

Training information will be available soon.

**41. Is there a cost to use the embedded teacher reliability check in GOLD? Will NDE fund any cost?**

There is a per teacher cost to access the embedded teacher reliability check. NDE is currently reviewing this process to determine funding possibilities.

**42. Will there be any funding for materials for districts who are switching?**

There are current district funding sources that may be accessed, including ARRA, SCIP, and Planning Region System Support Grants. The GOLD instruction book “Objectives for Development and Learning” is being provided by NDE to all NDE-sponsored GOLD training participants in 2011-12. Most other GOLD materials can be downloaded for free from the GOLD website once your subscription has been activated.

Please visit <http://www.teachingstrategies.com/page/GOLD.cfm> and browse through the Teaching Strategies online Bookshop to see the variety of materials available. Once your subscription has been activated, you will be able to download and print nearly everything you need free of charge. If you prefer to order, you may order materials directly from the online Bookshop.

NDE users will receive a 15% discount on GOLD print products until 10/1/11 (phone orders only, call 800-637-3652 option 4). When placing an order you must provide the following code to receive the discount: NDE2011.

**43. If we want to switch to Teaching Strategies Gold immediately, do we start over collecting entry data on all students?**

Yes. Since the items for each of the assessments are different, new data would need to be collected whenever the district makes the change. Since all 3 tools are authentic assessments, it is likely that scoring could be done using the same anecdotal data collected.

**44. Will we have to do double entry of data if a child is on AEPSi in 2011-2012 and still in part C in 2012-2013 when we have to switch to GOLD?**

For 2011-12 only, districts may elect to subscribe to GOLD for all new children B-5, as well as continue subscriptions to AEPS or COR for those children who will exit at the end of the 2011-12 year. Beginning in 2012-13, districts must subscribe to GOLD for all children B-5. If districts elect to maintain two subscriptions for 2011-12, district staff will need to be trained in GOLD by the start of the 2011-12 school year.